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Embassy of the
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Buenos Aires

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November 8, 1979

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

Claus Ruser, Esquire
Director, East Coast
Affairs (ARA/ECA)
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☒ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

Dear Claus:

This note is being rushed to meet the pouch since we have the feeling there may be some perception gaps opening up with ARA on the topic of the "high road".

Your letter of November 2nd related Timerman's description of the Argentine political scene and his conclusion that the pragmatic approach to our human rights objectives is ineffective. It was suggested that the US should simply take the high road because our efforts to work with the moderate factions in military regimes have produced modest results. Without calling a meeting to canvas Embassy opinion, I believe there would be virtually unanimity that supporting the moderates in Argentina is the only realistic alternative. Who is there to support other than the moderates? The Montoneros or the military hardliners? The existing political parties are not a realistic option in the near term and do not even pretend to be. It was not clear how Timerman's option for Argentina would work. The "high road" sounds suspiciously like a euphemism for cutting off all relations with the GOA until its behavior suits us better. Timerman's position that the pragmatic approach was wrong and that we should work with Venezuela and Mexico to build up democracy strikes me as the height of inconsistency. Mexico's track record in international politics is as pragmatic as they come, and we note that the Andean group is not stampeding into the Bolivian situation on the side of the angels.

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We are eager to join this issue if it is to be raised in the short term human rights strategy. We would prefer to have the issue stated somewhat differently than it is in the first full paragraph on page 3 of your letter. As stated it appears to prejudge the issue somewhat. It would also be helpful to have a specific description of what the "high road" is. We have done a number of assessments on the quantitative and qualitative improvements in the GOA's human rights record in the past year and while the progress has certainly not been fast or far enough, there can be no question that it has been substantial. The GOA's assertion that some things are very difficult for them to do was certainly born out by the Menéndez episode. It is also significant to me that only last month did the Vatican finally adopt a firm position on human rights in Argentina, and success will require further efforts with the hierarchy and the clergy here.

Finally, I was a bit puzzled by your remark that "ARA was perhaps too successful at its efforts at muting the Timerman visit," when in fact the Secretary rejected ARA's position on his visit to the President.

The announcements of assignments and promotions should start coming out about the end of next week if they are on schedule. Once these have been digested, then the Argentine military can return to giving some thought to running the country, provided it does not interfere with the vacation period.

Best regards,

Sincerely,


Maxwell Chaplin

PS: Here follows our rapid attempt to provide you with language for the HR Report on the topic of disappeared children:

There are numerous reports of minor children and adolescents who have disappeared, though it is very difficult to establish precise numbers. One category of these

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minors, which one source estimates at around 50, is constituted of children under the age of ten who disappeared with their parents and have not since been turned over to their relatives. Another category, estimated at between 55-60, are the children born to women who were pregnant at the time they were seized. According to testimony, these women, most of whom have not reappeared, gave birth while in detention. The children, like the minors under the age of ten, were apparently given out for adoption--indeed there is one case on the public record where two small children of a disappeared mother were found in Chile. Finally there is a more substantial group of adolescents between 11 and 20 who figure among the disappeared, totaling, by some estimates, more than 500.



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